



# Cultivating Compassion

A Webinar for Parents and Educators

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June 24, 2021

 Diana Hill PhD

The logo for Diana Hill PhD consists of a stylized, multi-petaled flower icon in white, positioned to the left of the name "Diana Hill PhD" in a black, sans-serif font.



# Today's Course

## HIGHLIGHTS AND PRACTICES

Definitions and Benefits of Compassion

Flows of Compassion

Your Brain: Threat, Drive, and Caring

Self-Compassion

Receive Compassion

Give Compassion



But wait.  
Can I get the slides?



[www.actdailyjournal.info/bravewriter](http://www.actdailyjournal.info/bravewriter)

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# Who am I?

DIANA HILL

PSYCHOLOGIST

Psychological Flexibility Guide:

I aim to help people grow lives that feel aligned with what they care about, in the domains that are important to them.

HUMAN

Mom, homesteader, partner, friend, daughter.

I am not a work in progress. I am a life in process.

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## Why Compassion?



Parenting is hard

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## THE PRICKLES OF PARENTING

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What is irritating to you about being a parent?  
(write in chat)



Parenting is sad





## THE SHADOWS OF PARENTING

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What is sad for you about being a parent?  
(write in chat)



Compassionate parenting:  
Hold the prickles and shadows with a caring heart

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The 3 /c/'s of Compassionate Parenting  
Courage  
Caring  
Kindness

“When you look at what it takes to have a human life, compassion is the only thing that makes sense.”

Dr. Russel Kolts  
Psychologists Off the Clock  
Episode #50



# What is compassion?



"A sensitivity to the suffering of oneself and others, combined with a commitment to do something about it."

-Paul Gilbert (2014)

Two dimensions:

- Psychology of Engagement
- Psychology of Alleviation

-Dennis Tirch (2020)



# What is compassion?

SIMPLY PUT, CARING WHEN SOMEONE IS HURTING  
AND ACTING ON THAT CARE

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# Benefits of Compassion

## WELLBEING

Less anxiety and stress  
Improved immune  
functioning  
Telomere length

## EMPATHY

Perspective taking  
Interoceptive  
awareness  
Insula  
Prosocial behavior

## RESILIENCE

Distress tolerance  
Post traumatic growth

## PARENTING

Decreased stress in new  
mothers  
rubs off onto mental  
health of kids

Sources: The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion by Christopher Germer, The ACT Practitioner's Guide to the Science of Compassion by Dennis Tirsch et al.,  
The Greater Good Science Center ,



Prepare the ground



# Compassion Flows Three Ways

A wide-angle photograph of a beach. In the foreground, a vibrant red flower lies on the wet sand, its reflection visible in the shallow water. The middle ground shows gentle waves washing onto the shore. In the background, several people are standing in the shallow water, and the ocean extends to a clear blue sky with light clouds.

GIVE COMPASSION TO  
YOURSELF

TAKE IN COMPASSION  
FROM ANOTHER

GIVE COMPASSION TO  
ANOTHER

Source: A Compassionate Mind by Paul Gilbert (2014)

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COMPASSIONATE MIND  
Dr. Paul Gilbert



# There's a deep yearning within us for connectedness and cooperation

Psychologists Off the Clock



Diana Hill PhD

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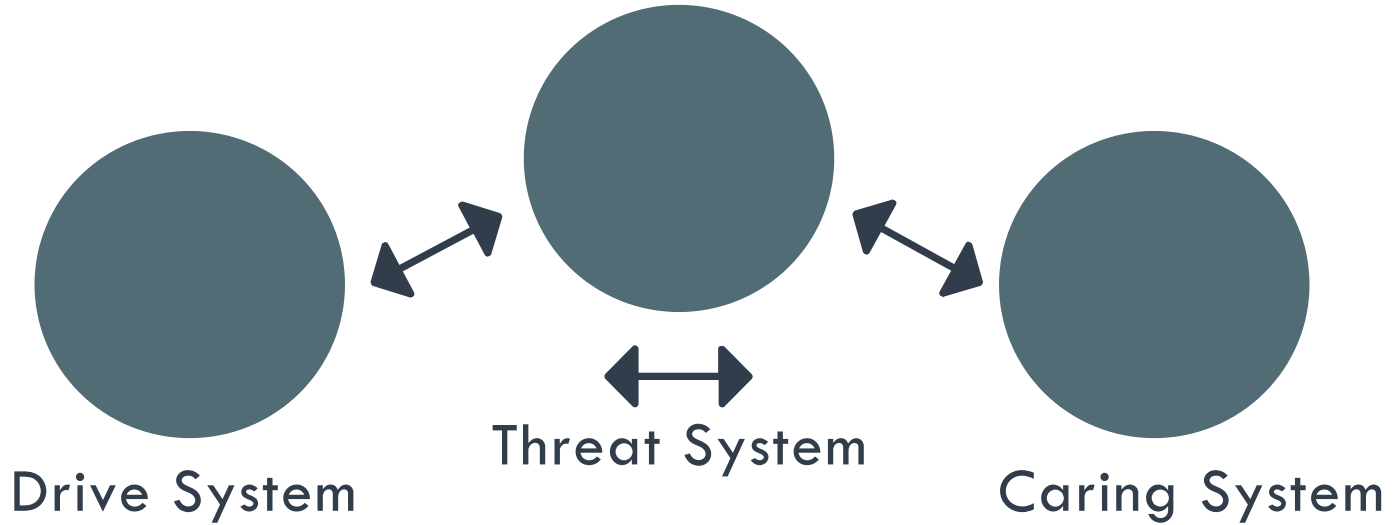
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# A Compassionate Mind

EVEN WITH A 'TRICKY BRAIN'



# Compassionate Mind Training



# Compassionate Mind Training



## Threat System

Seeking Safety

Fight Flight Freeze

NE, Epi, Amygdala



# Your Threat System

WHAT ACTIVATES YOUR THREAT SYSTEM?

situations, thoughts, memories

WHAT DOES THREAT FEEL LIKE IN YOUR BODY?

physical sensations

HOW DO YOU ACT WHEN YOU FEEL THREAT?

fight, flight, freeze

# Compassionate Mind Training



## Drive System

Seeking Resources

Competition

Not enough

Dopamine



## Threat System

Seeking Safety

Fight Flight Freeze

NE, Epi, Amygdala





# Your Drive System

WHAT ACTIVATES YOUR DRIVE SYSTEM?

situations, thoughts, memories

WHAT DOES DRIVE FEEL LIKE IN YOUR BODY?

physical sensations

HOW DO YOU ACT WHEN YOU FEEL DRIVEN?

compete, strive, perfectionism, speed up

# Compassionate Mind Training



## Drive System

Seeking Resources

Competition

Not enough

Dopamine

## Threat System

Seeking Safety

Fight Flight Freeze

NE, Epi, Amygdala

## Caring System

Safe, Content

Present

Oxytocin

Vagus Nerve



# Your Caring System

WHAT ACTIVATES YOUR CARING SYSTEM?

situations, thoughts, memories

WHAT DOES CARING FEEL LIKE IN YOUR BODY?

physical sensations

HOW DO YOU ACT WHEN YOU FEEL CARE?

safe, present, soothed



# Practice #1: Embodied Check-in

WHAT IS MY LEVEL OF THREAT, DRIVE AND CARING RIGHT NOW?

# START WITH THE BODY



# Compassion Flows Three Ways



SELF-COMPASSION

RECEIVE  
COMPASSION

GIVE  
COMPASSION

# Compassion Flows Three Ways

SELF-  
COMPASSION

# Fears of Compassion

## SELF-COMPASSION

I don't deserve to be kind and forgiving to myself.

I will become dependant on it.

If I become less self-critical, then my standards will drop.

I will become a weak person.





COMPASSION MOTIVATES  
**Dr. Kristin Neff**

**What the  
research shows  
overwhelmingly  
is that**

 Diana Hill PHD

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buy teacher appreciation gift

up  
Dinner

stay Positive!!

Don't forget pick up drycleaning

Parent Teacher conference at 1pm

Soccer practice 3pm

Wash Baseball pants for tomorrows Game!!

yoga 7am

eggs milk bread pasta

Lacrosse practice



**Your Inner Critic:  
The least helpful  
passenger**

buy teacher appreciation gift

Dinner

don't forget pick up drycleaning

Wash Baseball pants for tomorrow's game!!

Lacrosse practice

eggs milk bread pasta

stay alive!



Your Inner Critic:

What does it say?  
What does it sound  
like?

What does it look like?



buy  
teacher  
appreciation  
gift

Dinner

milk  
bread  
pasta

Lacrosse  
practice

up

# Your Self-Compassionate Mind

## The most helpful passenger

A corkboard with several colorful sticky notes (pink, yellow, light blue, green, orange) and pushpins (white, blue) pinned to it. A semi-transparent teal rounded rectangle is overlaid in the center, containing text.

## Your Self-Compassionate Mind

What would it say?  
What would it sound like?  
What would it look like?

# SELF-COMPASSION

**MINDFULNESS:** Get present in moments of struggle

**KINDNESS:** Treat yourself the way you would treat someone you love

**COMMON HUMANITY:** You are not alone

Kristin Neff (2016, 2020)



# Practice #2

## Self-Compassion

**MINDFULNESS:** This is a hard parenting moment.

**COMMON HUMANITY:** Every parent struggles sometimes.

**KINDNESS:** May I be one with myself. May I be kind to myself. May I accept myself.

Adapted from <https://self-compassion.org/exercise-2-self-compassion-break/>



# Compassion Flows Three Ways



SELF-COMPASSION

RECEIVE  
COMPASSION

GIVE  
COMPASSION

# Compassion Flows Three Ways

RECEIVE  
COMPASSION

# Fears of Compassion

## RECEIVING COMPASSION FROM OTHERS

People won't be there when I need them.

It makes me anxious and embarrassed.

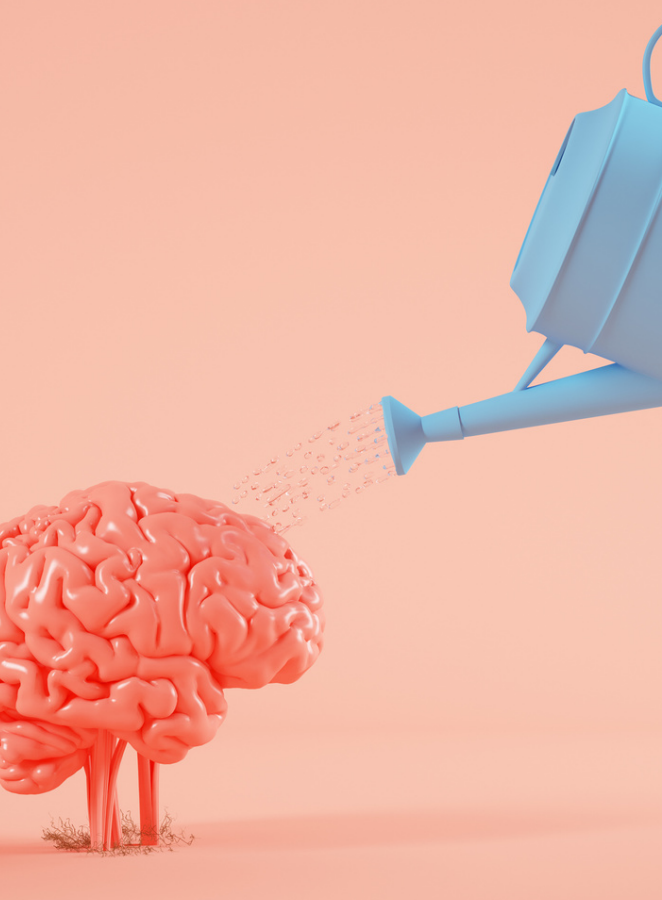
I'm fearful of becoming dependent.

I need to put up a barrier.

Fears of Self-Compassion Scale (Gilbert et al., 2011)



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# Positive Neuroplasticity

Take in the good from others,  
and grow a compassionate brain

POSITIVE NEUROPLASTICITY

**Dr. Rick Hanson**

**The brain is  
continually being  
changed by  
media, by other**

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# Positive Neuroplasticity "Take in the Good"

H: Have a positive experience

E: Enrich the experience

A: Absorb the experience

L: Link the positive to the painful

Neurodharma by Rick Hanson (2020)

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"Piglet sided up to Pooh from behind.

'Pooh?' he whispered.

"Yes, Piglet?"

"Nothing," said Piglet,  
taking Pooh's paw.

"I just wanted to be sure of you."

A.A. Milne





# Practice #3

## Receive Compassion

**MINDFULNESS:** Take in compassion and linger on it.

**COMMON HUMANITY:** No parent can do it alone.

**KINDNESS:** May I take in the good. May I accept help.  
May I feel loved.

# Compassion Flows Three Ways



SELF-COMPASSION

RECEIVE  
COMPASSION

GIVE  
COMPASSION

# Compassion Flows Three Ways

GIVE  
COMPASSION

# Fears of Compassion

## GIVING COMPASSION TO OTHERS

People will take advantage of me if they see me as too compassionate.

It lets people off the hook.

Some people don't deserve compassion.

They will drain my emotional resources.

People need to help themselves.

We co-regulate:  
facial expression  
tone of voice  
words





the good  
the bad  
the ugly



compassion helps  
prevent the bad  
from getting ugly

Are you a sea urchin or a sea aneome?





What about your partner? Child? Friend?



# Give Compassion to Others

NOTICE the pattern

CONNECT with the vulnerability

EMBODY compassion (face, tone, posture)





# Practice #4

## Give Compassion

**MINDFULNESS:** This is a hard relationship moment.

**COMMON HUMANITY:** Every relationship struggles sometimes.

**KINDNESS:** May we be one with each other. May you feel accepted. May you feel loved.

# Compasion Flows Three Ways

SELF-  
COMPASSION

RECEIVE  
COMPASSION

GIVE  
COMPASSION



# The Flow of Compassion

May I be one with myself.

May I be kind to myself.

May I accept myself.

May I take in the good.

May I accept help.

May I feel loved.

May we be one with each other.

May you feel accepted.

May you feel loved.

# Resources

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ACT DAILY JOURNAL

THE COMPASSIONATE MIND

MINDFUL SELF-COMPASSION

HOW TO BE NICE TO YOURSELF



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